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ABSTRACT

A practicum was developed to implement a career awareness program for pregnant and parenting teenagers as a part of a continuum of services provided to adolescents by a nonprofit agency. The overall goals of the program were to help participants become aware of their identity and ambitions, to assist them in setting educational and career goals, and to help them in developing an action plan for the attainment of these goals. The established curriculum "Career Choices" (Bingham and Stryker), was used, supplemented by other life-skills materials, two commercially-marketed test instruments, video presentations, and a guest speaker. The seminar was held weekly in the agency's offices; attendance fluctuated between 4 and 11 participants. Transportation and child care were provided through the involvement of volunteers and an informal supper was served each week. All participants completing the program successfully identified one or more areas of career interest and completed a Personal Action Plan meeting minimum standards. Goals set for employment of participants were met but those established for educational continuation fell somewhat short of expectations. The program was successful as a component of services to teenage parents; however, most participants required additional, sustained, and individualized support. The appendixes include a participant Personal Action Plan form and a supplementary questionnaire. (Contains 39 references.) (NB)

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ED 362 807

Moving Parenting Teenagers toward Self-Sufficiency through a Career Awareness Program

by

Janet M. Wise

Cluster 52

A Practicum I Report Presented to the
Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

1993

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

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This practicum report was submitted by Janet M. Wise under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed. D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

Sept. 15, 1993
Date of Final Approval of Report

June S. Delano
June S. Delano, Ph.D., Adviser

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Without the help of my adviser, Dr. June S. Delano, the completion of this practicum and report would not have been possible. Her calmness, good humor and confidence in my ability helped me through many stressful periods and are deeply appreciated.

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Last but not least, sincere thanks to Marti Lavis, Director of the Governor's Office for Children, for granting me permission to implement my project at Parents Anonymous, for giving me the time to do it and remaining supportive throughout.

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ABSTRACT

Moving Parenting Teenagers toward Self-sufficiency through a Career Awareness Program. Wise, Janet M., 1993. Practicum Report, Nova University, Ed. D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Teenage Parents/Adolescent Pregnancy/Self-sufficiency/Job Readiness/Pre-employment Training/Career Awareness.

This practicum implemented a career awareness program for pregnant and parenting teenagers as a part of a continuum of services provided to teens by a nonprofit agency. The overall goal of the program was to help participants become aware of their identity and ambitions, to assist them in setting educational and career goals and developing an action plan for their attainment.

An established curriculum, *Career Choices*, by Melinda Bingham and Sandra Stryker, was utilized, supplemented by other life-skills materials, two commercially marketed test instruments, video presentations and a guest speaker. The seminar was held weekly in the agency's offices. Transportation and child care were provided through the involvement of volunteers and an informal supper was served each week.

All participants completing the program successfully identified one or more areas of career interest and completed a Personal Action Plan meeting minimum standards. Goals set for employment of participants were met but those established for educational continuation fell somewhat short of expectations. The program was successful as a component of services to teen parents, however, most require additional, sustained and individualized support.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community

The practicum setting was an international, nonprofit agency located in a large, metropolitan area of the Southwestern United States. The area had a population of approximately two million in 1990. It is an urban community, typical of the Southwest, with a substantial Hispanic population but with relatively small percentages of other minorities. According to 1990 census figures, about 72% of the residents of the state were white/nonhispanic and the remainder (28%) was composed of various minority groups. The child population of the state in 1990 was 60 % white, 27 % Hispanic, 8 % Indian, 4 % Black and 2% other (Morrison Institute, 1992). These figures illustrate the growth of the Hispanic population.

The state compared unfavorably with others in most indicators of well-being for children and youth (Center for the Study of Social Policy, 1993). These indicators included the percentages of children living in poverty, the child death rate, the teen suicide rate, the juvenile violent crime arrest rate and the percentages of births to single teenagers. The composite rank of the state, as assessed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy in 1993, was 37 out of 51. While this rank reflected a considerable improvement over the two prior years, the state was among seven in the nation with over half of its new families formed in 1990 at risk in one of more areas. Child abuse and neglect were also serious problems as evidenced by a 63% increase in reports between 1985 and 1990 (Morrison Institute, 1992).

The nonprofit agency has responded to the multiple needs in the state by

establishing programs to prevent and treat child abuse and strengthen families. Programs delivered have included parenting classes and educational programs for diverse populations, parent support groups, parent aide services, a speaker's bureau, a Hispanic VISTA project, a toll-free family lifeline and an in-home educational and support program for pregnant and parenting teens.

Although the issues of teenage pregnancy, parenting and child abuse have been seen as controversial and opinions remain sharply divided in the community, the agency has successfully maintained a helpful, nonthreatening presence which has contributed significantly to its effectiveness. The agency has not involved itself in the area of sexual abuse. Most of its programs are voluntary and have emphasized self-help. Referrals have been accepted from Child Protective Services, however, and the two agencies have developed a cooperative working relationship. All programs have been implemented through the use of trained volunteers.

Established in the state in 1975, the agency employed 53 staff statewide and recruited, trained and supervised approximately 700 volunteers during 1992. Metropolitan area offices had 33 staff, approximately 500 volunteers and served about 200 client families per week. Programs operated in nine of the state's 15 counties and on six indian reservations indicating a strong commitment to rural as well as urban communities. Service to ethnic minorities has been emphasized and efforts to recruit and retain bilingual staff have proven successful. Volunteers have been drawn from the local communities and represent all ages, ethnicities, educational levels and socioeconomic groups.

As its primary focus has been the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect, the agency has targeted populations especially at risk for these

behaviors. Some examples are families with special needs children including substance addicted newborns, families experiencing unusual stress and families begun by teenage parents. Referrals have come from a variety of sources such as other community organizations, governmental agencies, private therapists and individuals. Because the agency's programs feature self-help and education, many clients have referred themselves.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The writer was a volunteer in the nonprofit agency and was involved in its teenage parenting program as a student intern. Because of its commitment to education and extensive use of volunteers, this arrangement was not unusual. Prior to contact with clients, all volunteers complete a general orientation as well as a training program specific to the area in which the volunteer intends to serve. This training is presented by agency staff at regular intervals and was completed by the writer in January, 1993.

The nonprofit agency was selected as a practicum site because the writer wished to solve a problem and engage in a project that strongly related to her work content. Involvement with a teenage parenting program in a community-based agency made this possible.

The writer was employed as Adolescent Specialist in a small governmental office that performed no direct services. The staff of this office consisted of a Director, five professional staff members and four individuals who provided clerical support. Professional personnel operated independently with little interaction with one another. Areas addressed were diverse but all involved children and youth

issues. Examples include juvenile justice, child abuse and neglect, dependent care, early childhood concerns and legislation as it pertains to children and youth.

As Adolescent Specialist, the writer's responsibilities included the acquisition and distribution of information relating to adolescent issues, particularly teenage pregnancy, parenting and teen suicide. The position was supported by Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) funds whose primary focus was the development and enhancement of programs for pregnant and parenting teens. This was the most important component of the job due to the requirements of the funding source.

Other duties of the position entailed the coordination of two statewide task forces, one addressing adolescent suicide and the other child abuse prevention. Because of the writer's background in child welfare, there was also frequent involvement in children's justice projects, child protection, foster care issues and family preservation efforts. Advocacy for children and youth in all areas mentioned was another important job responsibility.

Prior to assuming this position in 1991, the writer was employed by the state child protection agency for seven years, serving in both case management and policy and program development capacities. Also certified as a teacher, the writer taught in elementary school, junior high and community college settings before joining the child welfare agency in 1984.

The Director of the writer's home agency was informed about the nature of the practicum and granted permission for the writer to participate in the nonprofit agency's teenage parenting program. The nonprofit agency also granted permission for the writer to implement a practicum with parenting teens.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

Effective parenting is a demanding responsibility. It requires maturity, commitment, a willingness to consistently put the needs of another individual before one's own and a long-term interest in promoting that individual's development and growth. Even in the most optimal circumstances it is sometimes difficult to be a good parent.

Ideally, one would assume this obligation after physical maturity has been attained and such major developmental tasks of adolescence as the establishment of identity and independence have been achieved. Other more survival-oriented activities including basic education, occupational training and introduction to the work force should also be completed or well under way.

Unfortunately, most teenagers who become pregnant and choose to bear children have not completed their own development, are not self-sufficient and are poorly equipped to undertake additional responsibilities. This is especially true of younger adolescents, that is, those who are less than seventeen years old.

Although teenage parents are not a homogenous group and exceptions exist to generalizations about them, it can nevertheless be demonstrated that many do not complete high school and, as a consequence, lack the skills necessary to obtain adequate employment and become self-reliant citizens. Inevitably and increasingly, these teenage parents and their offspring have

placed a burden upon other members of society as reflected in welfare payments, food stamps, subsidized medical care and other publicly financed programs in which they are disproportionately represented.

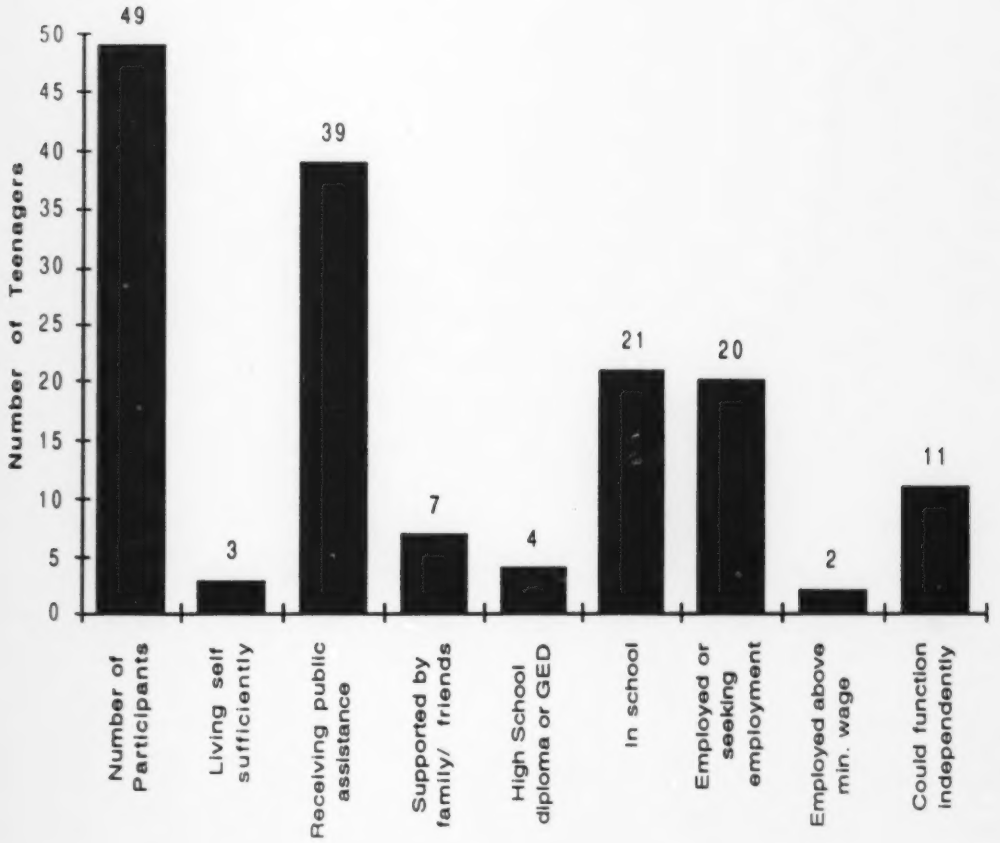
Parenting children is a task of adulthood as is supporting oneself and functioning as an independent, responsible citizen. Because most teenagers have not achieved adulthood themselves, they cannot be expected to adequately discharge the numerous obligations that parenthood places upon them. Briefly stated then, the problem was: Parenting teenagers face adult responsibilities that they are unprepared to assume.

Problem Documentation

Evidence to substantiate the existence of this problem in the local setting was drawn primarily from experiences in the nonprofit agency's teenage parenting program during the calendar year 1992. At the writer's request, the Program Coordinator reviewed records and interviewed clients about school attendance and completion, work experience, welfare assistance, living arrangements, long-range goals and independent living.

The agency's in-home educational and support program for teen parents served 49 young women in 1992. Among this group, only four had completed high school or obtained a GED upon completion of the program or when last contacted by the agency. See Figure 1. While this appeared to be an especially grim statistic, it should be noted that not all of these teenagers had attained the age when high school graduation would be anticipated.

Figure 1



IN-HOME SUPPORT PROGRAM FOR PREGNANT AND PARENTING TEENAGERS
STATUS OF PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS - 1992

Assessment of other areas revealed that 39 out of 49 teen parents were receiving public assistance, seven were supported by family or friends and only three were living self-sufficiently. On the positive side, 21 were in school and 20 were employed or seeking employment. Figure 1 illustrates the results of the record reviews and interviews. Additionally, five parenting teenagers were informally interviewed by the Program Coordinator to assess career objectives and future plans and only one clearly articulated goals that included self-reliance and independent living.

In the effort to gather more information pertaining to the problem in the local setting, the writer interviewed two knowledgeable individuals: the Manager of a maternal and child health program within the County Health Department and the Adolescent Pregnancy Program Coordinator for a statewide philanthropic foundation. Both confirmed the existence of the problem and provided interesting anecdotes that illustrated its impact and severity. The Coordinator of the adolescent pregnancy program stated that high school graduation is probably the most significant milestone and that less than ten percent of parenting teens who have not graduated from high school are capable of independent functioning (J. Walruff, personal communication, January 22, 1993).

Causative Analysis

The problems associated with teenage parenting are caused by the juxtaposition of two incompatible conditions: the adult demands of parenthood and the incomplete development of the adolescent. Analogies can be drawn to other situations in which readiness is a prerequisite for mastering a skill or completing a

task. The process of learning to read provides an apt example. While it is sometimes possible to teach a three or four-year-old to read, the skill can usually be accomplished with far greater efficiency when the child is more developmentally mature.

The more complex the task or skill to be mastered, the more its successful accomplishment depends upon a variety of preexisting factors. Certainly parenting is among the most complex tasks of adulthood and one which requires a sustained effort that even mature adults find difficult at times.

Furthermore, dramatic social changes have exacerbated the discrepancy between the requirements for self-reliant adult living and the ability of most adolescents to cope with those demands. One example of these changes is the decline of "blue-collar" vocational possibilities and the increasing need for an educated, technologically oriented work force (Offerman & Gowing, 1990). The numerous articles and studies focusing on the need for high school completion among teen parents have begged an important question: Will a high school education be enough to ensure self-sufficiency?

Another social transformation that has made teen parenting more difficult is the changing structure of the family. The last two decades have seen a steady increase in the number of divorces and single-parent families. While this trend impacts everyone, it has placed the greatest burden on those with the fewest resources, i.e., teenage parents. Three-fourths (74.5%) of all females age 19 or less who gave birth in the state in 1991 were single (Mrela, 1992), and the percent of all births to single teens worsened by 27% between 1985 and 1990 (Center for the Study of Social Policy, 1993). These changing family patterns may also have resulted in reduced availability of extended family support for teenage parents.

In summary, the problems associated with teenage parenting are caused by the interaction of the demands of parenthood and the limited ability of teenagers to meet those demands. Many parenting teenagers, particularly those under age 17, are developmentally immature and most have limited knowledge, experience and resources. As a result of this immaturity plus the lack of exposure to educational experiences, many are ignorant about life options and adult responsibilities as well as the processes that may hasten the development of the necessary skills.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

The literature substantiated the problems of teenage pregnancy and childbearing, documented their increase, examined antecedents, associated factors and consequences, and proposed various explanations. In fact, the wealth of literature on the subject is in itself eloquent testimony to the seriousness of the problem and the high level of concern among social scientists, researchers, child and youth advocates and practitioners. Marian Wright Edelman, President of the Children's Defense Fund, expressed it clearly: "Adolescent pregnancy is everybody's problem in every part of the United States." (1987, p. 57)

The extent of the problem and recent statistical trends were examined first. Although the number of teenage pregnancies was more difficult to track than births, it is generally acknowledged that since 1973 there have been at least one million teen pregnancies in the United States each year (Children's Defense Fund, 1992; Dryfoos, 1990; Hayes, 1987). According to the Alan Guttmacher Institute (1981), most of these pregnancies were unintended. National estimates regarding the

percentages of teen pregnancies that have resulted in live births varied somewhat but hovered in the range of 45-50% (Hayes, 1987; Hofferth & Hayes, 1987; Mrela, 1992).

There were 517,989 births to U.S. teenagers in 1989, an increase of over 28,000 births from the prior year (Center for Population Options, 1992). Since the number of teens in the population has declined slightly, the absolute numbers do not provide a complete picture of the change. An increase of 28,000 may seem insignificant in a nation of almost 250 million but it actually represented an increase of eight percent in only one year (Center for Population Options, 1992).

It has now become clear that the increase cited above was not an unusual aberration but part of a national trend. Recent information released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (1993) indicated that the national birthrate for females between 15 - 19 increased every year since 1986.

Teen pregnancy and birthrates in the writer's state paralleled national trends but were substantially higher (Mrela, 1992). Significantly more teenagers who became pregnant carried the pregnancy to term and gave birth than did their national peers. In 1991, 77.6% of all teenage pregnancies in the state resulted in a live birth and one-third of these teen mothers had one or more prior pregnancies (Mrela, 1992). Perhaps the most disturbing tendency, however, was the increase in both pregnancy rates and birthrates among younger teens. In just two years, from 1989 to 1991, the statewide pregnancy rate among teens ages 15 - 17 jumped from 53.7 to 63.8 per 1000 and their birthrate rose from 42.4 to 50.4. Mrela pointed out that teenagers in the state were closer to the U. S. Public Health Service national health objectives for the year 2000 in 1981 than in 1991.

An understanding of the economic impact of teenage childbearing upon the

average taxpayer may heighten awareness of the enormity of the problem. The Center for Population Options estimated that in 1990 the single year public costs of teenage childbearing were over $25 billion. Single year costs mean "the amount the U.S. federal government spends in a single year on behalf of all families in which the first birth occurred when the mother was a teenager." (Center for Population Options, 1992, p. 4) Three programs, AFDC, Medicaid and Food Stamps were included in the computation of these figures. Although comparable statistics for the state were not available, Mrela (1992) documented that in 1991, fully two-thirds (67.8%) of all costs for labor and delivery to teenagers were paid by public sources. According to a representative of the Department of Health Services, the estimated cost of a normal labor and delivery in 1990 was $4500 (J. Pearson, personal communication, June, 1992).

There have been numerous explorations of the factors associated with teenage pregnancy and childbearing and various theories have been advanced regarding possible causes for the currently increasing rates. For purposes of this proposal, the major theoretical concepts were summarized.

One of the most consistently reported correlations was between teenage childbearing and poverty, poor school achievement, school dropout and low parental educational level. There is a considerable body of literature that discussed this relationship (Alan Guttmacher Institute, 1981; Center for Population Options, 1992; Children's Defense Fund, 1988, Dryfoos, 1990; Hayes, 1987; Mott & Marsiglio, 1985; Nord et al., 1992). Dryfoos expressed the concept succinctly. "One of the most significant research findings in recent years has confirmed the interrelationships between basic skills, poverty and teen childbearing." (1990, p. 75) It is important to note that research has revealed a

correlation among the factors but not a clear cause and effect relationship. It has not been firmly established whether poverty and educational disadvantage lead directly to teenage childbearing or whether it is, in fact, the other way around (Nord et al., 1992). In any case, Dryfoos believed that the findings corroborate the existence of a disadvantaged minority or "underclass," that reflects economic and educational differences rather than racial, ethnic or cultural.

Leon Dash, a reporter for the *Washington Post*, elaborated upon the same theme from a somewhat different perspective. After living in a Washington ghetto for 18 months and becoming well acquainted with many of its inhabitants, he concluded that established family patterns of early childbearing, an absence of employment opportunities and the need to enhance self-esteem strongly contributed to the high rate of teen births among black teenagers (Dash, 1990).

Another explanation for the high rate of teenage pregnancy and childbearing in the United States was the theory that the availability of welfare benefits has increased the willingness of teenagers to give birth outside of marriage (Duncan & Hoffman, 1990; Murray, 1984). Although other literature tended to discredit the notion of a causal relationship, there did appear to be some connection (Caldas, 1993; Jones et al., 1985).

Other important factors believed to be associated with teen pregnancy and childbearing in America were ambivalent and contradictory social attitudes about sex and conflicting messages presented in the media, schools, churches, various other organizations and families. These conditions, combined with the lack of readily available, reliable information about sexuality and the inaccessibility of low cost birth control devices, have created an environment in which teenagers face very difficult choices:

> American teenagers seem to have inherited the worst of all possible worlds regarding their exposure to messages about sex: Movies, music, radio and TV tell them that sex is romantic, exciting titillating; premarital sex and cohabitation are visible ways of life among the adults they see and hear about; their own parents and their parents' friends are likely to be divorced or separated but involved in sexual relationships. Yet, at the same time, young people get the message that good girls should say no. (Jones, et al., 1985)

Finally, Caldas (1993) reviewed the existing literature and research on adolescent pregnancy and childbearing and examined six current theories regarding the prevalence of teen childbearing in the United States. These hypotheses included: (1) reproductive ignorance; (2) unfulfilled psychological needs; (3) availability of welfare benefits; (4) parental role modeling and lack of supervision; (5) influence of social norms; and (6) physiological (hormonal) influences.

Although strengths as well as weaknesses were found in each argument, Caldas concluded that no single theory was sufficient to explain what is obviously an exceedingly complicated social problem. Each explanation was too narrow, too focused to provide the necessary insight in and of itself. Caldas stated, "In reality, it is more likely the complex interaction of the factors stressed by each hypothesis that accounts for the high adolescent pregnancy and birthrates in the United States." (1993, p. 15)

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The goal of this practicum was that parenting teenagers who participated in the educational program would gain self-knowledge enabling them to make informed decisions about future career possibilities. It was also expected that they would establish realistic goals and understand the process required to attain them. The ultimate goal for these teen parents was that they would be better equipped to meet their responsibilities to themselves and to their children.

It was anticipated from the outset that the number of parenting teens would be small and that changes might occur while the program was in progress. This was because the program was voluntary and because most participants could not transport themselves to the program site. It was projected that eight teen parents would participate and complete the program.

Expected Outcomes

Three major outcomes were projected for this practicum. The first is that six out of eight program participants, through an assessment of their values, interests and skills, will identify at least one area of career interest. They will also explore the skills required and training needed in the area identified and establish a realistic action plan for acquiring the skills and training. If a realistic plan cannot be

developed, participants will be encouraged to reevaluate their values, interests and skills. Although it is expected that most participants will discover more than one area of career interest, one area will be accepted as the minimum standard.

The second anticipated outcome is that six out of eight participants will develop the details of their action plan by establishing a long-range career goal, a three-year goal, a one-year goal and an outline of the steps (objectives) necessary to attain each goal. The long-range career goal should be within the areas of interest identified and the one-year and three-year goals must move in a logical progression toward the long-range career objective. To be minimally acceptable, at least two out of three goals must be established with at least one objective leading to each goal.

The final outcome involves a determination of the participants' involvement in activities that directly contribute to the accomplishment of their interim and long-range goals. Such activities include current enrollment and acceptable academic performance in school or in an alternative educational program such as a GED preparation program. Other activities that are likely to lead to goal attainment are participation in job preparation, training or apprenticeship programs and actual work experience, either full or part-time.

Successful results will depend upon achievement of all three outcomes. Although it is important to know what one wants and to develop a plan to attain it, perhaps the most critical factor is initiating and sustaining concrete action.

Measurement of Outcomes

An assessment of the participants' status prior to entering the program

was conducted. This took the form of a questionnaire to supplement and update existing data on each individual (see Appendix A.). Since many of the participants were known to the nonprofit agency, basic demographic information had already been gathered. For those who had no previous contact with the agency, the questionnaire was expanded to collect all relevant information.

The purpose of the supplementary questionnaire was to establish baseline information regarding each participant's living arrangements, support systems, educational level and school plans. It also assessed work status, experience and long and short-term goals. The writer conducted personal interviews with eight potential participants prior to program startup to administer the questionnaire, establish rapport and to form an initial impression of the individual's interest level. Questionnaires were administered to a few individuals by agency staff. Other participants, hearing about the program through word-of mouth, joined the seminar without completing a supplementary questionnaire. The writer administered questionnaires to these participants during the seminar.

As the educational program progressed, each participant developed a Personal Action Plan and it was through this document that the first two outcomes were assessed (see Appendix B.). The information needed to create the plan was generated through exercises completed during the weekly class sessions. Teen parents identified their areas of career interest and developed a personal profile by the systematic assessment of their values, interests, skills and aptitudes contained in the text, *Career Choices* (Bingham & Stryker, 1990). This personal profile provided a common point of reference during the seminar and participants returned to it again and again to add entries and to utilize information recorded there (see Appendix C.).

Two commercially marketed tests were also administered to augment students' self-knowledge, assist them in developing a profile of career interests and to facilitate awareness of skills and training required in designated areas. The *Voc-Tech Quick Screener* (Robinett & Kauk, 1991) was administered early in the seminar. This test has been widely used and recommended by local facilitators of vocationally-oriented programs for teen parents. Although somewhat useful, it is aimed primarily toward those who intend to enter trades or occupations not requiring a college education. Several participants felt this test did not adequately reflect their interests or include a sufficient range of career options. For this reason, another test was also given later in the seminar.

The second test administered was the *JOB-O: Enhanced* (Cutler, Ferry, Kauk & Robinett, 1992). This test lists more occupations, includes a wider range of educational levels and, in general, was better suited to the interests, abilities and aspirations of the students. The *JOB-O* provides information about average earnings, expected growth, long-term outlook and education or training required for 120 occupations. For each of these occupations, a minimum of four to six related jobs are also listed. Students reported that this test was very useful to them in identifying areas of career interest and learning more about various occupations. Permission to use these testing materials was granted by the publishers.

Students added to or revised their Personal Action Plans throughout the duration of the program and completed them prior to its conclusion. The completed plans were used to measure the first and second outcomes, i.e., the identification of areas of career interest and the development of specific goals and objectives. Each participant's Personal Action Plan was evaluated by the writer and the

cofacilitator. Although minimally acceptable standards were set, individual differences in maturity, education and experience were taken into consideration. Participants represented a wide range in age, education and experience thus it was not possible to hold them all to the same standard of achievement.

The final outcome, concrete action on the part of each participant, was measured by the writer at the conclusion of the program through the participants' self-report, as verified by the teen parenting Program Coordinator. Six out of eight participants were projected to be actively engaged in school or GED preparation, taking part in job training, a vocational or transitional program and/or working full or part-time. Success was defined as involvement in one or more of these areas but did not require a change from the baseline data. If a participant was in school at the beginning and remained in school at the end, it was considered a successful outcome. Since there are endless variations in school and vocational programs, opportunities and time frames, this outcome required individualized assessment of each program participant by the writer and cofacilitator.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Possible Solutions

Teenage childbearing with its many unfortunate consequences is an extremely complex social issue and it would be foolish to suggest that there is a single solution, or even that a combination of strategies would provide the definitive answer. The literature spanning the last 20 - 25 years is vast and replete with programs and strategies that have been implemented. Many have demonstrated success and yet the problem still exists. In the United States it has not been resolved or even arrested. Indeed, as documented in Chapter II, teenage pregnancy and birthrates are increasing again, after many years of decline. This is true nationally and in the writer's state as well (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1993; Mrela, 1992).

This is not intended to imply that the situation is hopeless and that nothing will make a difference. Rather, it illustrates the gravity of the problem, the magnitude of the consequences and the critical need for high-level concern, strong leadership and reevaluation of national priorities. Meanwhile, in local communities around the nation individuals must do what they can to help, one small program or even one person at a time.

Before discussing solution strategies reviewed in the literature, it may be helpful to clarify the differences between program categories. The two major types of pregnant and parenting teen programs are those that seek to prevent

pregnancy (prevention programs), and those that deal with the results by reducing negative consequences (care programs), (Hofferth, 1991). Although the latter category was the focus of this practicum, a clear distinction cannot be drawn. For example, even in programs designed to keep parenting teens in school and prepare them for work, an associated goal is to prevent additional early and unintended births. Without these important preventive aspects, care programs are less likely to be successful.

One of the most dependable relationships with teenage childbearing, subsequent disadvantage and long-term welfare dependency is educational deficiency: getting behind in school somewhere along the line, possibly very early, and staying there (Dryfoos, 1990; Furstenberg et al., 1987; Hayes, 1987; Hofferth & Hayes, 1987). Because of this, most programs for parenting teens have emphasized high school completion as a primary goal. Without a diploma or GED, most teen mothers are headed for a career at a minimum wage job, at best, and a life of dependency on welfare, family or friends is likely.

As discussed in Chapter II, the chicken and the egg argument continues. Does a young woman fall behind and drop out of school because she is pregnant or does she get pregnant because she has already dropped out or is hopelessly behind and believes there is nothing to lose? Whatever the answer may be, the solution is already clear. Somehow, all adolescents at risk, especially teen parents, must be motivated to stay in school and provided whatever assistance is necessary in order to ensure their success.

The abundance of "comprehensive care programs" for teen parents attests to the general acceptance of this concept. These programs have addressed a wide range of needs including maternal and child health care, prevention of repeat

pregnancies, infant/child day care and transportation, parenting skills training, school completion and employment preparation and placement assistance (Weatherley, 1991). A number of these programs have been implemented around the country and many have demonstrated positive results. This model received backing from the *Adolescent Health Services and Pregnancy Prevention Act* of 1978 and this contributed to the widespread development of these programs (Hayes, 1987).

Project Redirection was a well-known and thoroughly documented example of a comprehensive care program. Its objectives included school continuation, life management and employability skills, improved health of mothers and infants, delay of repeat pregnancies and reduction in welfare dependency (Branch, et al, 1984). This program was initiated in 1980 and continued through the mid-1980s in four sites. It was somewhat unusual, according to Quint (1991) in that it was rigorously evaluated, its participants were especially disadvantaged and the model included some distinctive features such as the "community woman" mentoring component. Project participants were evaluated against a comparison group at one-year, two-year and five-year points following completion of the program and results were positive in some, but not all, targeted areas. In employment, welfare receipt and parenting skills, program participants demonstrated significant gains over the comparison group but unfortunately this effect did not extend to school completion or number of additional births (Quint, 1991).

These results once again revealed the complexity of the problem and highlighted the inherent difficulties in the implementation of a program that is truly comprehensive. Although Quint (1991) stated that "a comprehensive program for

young mothers can make a lasting difference," she acknowledged that it is difficult for programs to be uniformly strong in all areas. Most investigators have maintained some reservations about the effectiveness of comprehensive programs. Hofferth and Hayes (1987) indicated that some programs performed well in narrowly defined areas. Hayes (1987), while noting positive short-term outcomes, was less sanguine about the effects over a longer period of time. Hayes also noted that comprehensive programs depend upon a variety of local services and resources and thus their effectiveness is limited by the availability of these resources. Weatherley (1991) saw benefits to comprehensive programs but pointed out that it is unrealistic to expect that any short-term program will compensate for a lifetime of poverty and disadvantage.

Mentoring programs, as noted above in regard to *Project Redirection*, represent a promising and relatively new intervention for pregnant and parenting teens. Usually they are a component of another program rather than a stand-alone intervention. They are based on the assumption that many teenage parents have experienced a dearth of positive adult role models in their lives and have few adults to whom they may turn for assistance, validation and emotional support. It is expected that the mentors will become helpful, supportive friends as well as models for appropriate adult functioning and occupational success. Branch, et al. (1984) considered this component to be an important factor in the success of *Project Redirection*. Locally-based parenting teen projects have also utilized this component with success (A. Thompson, personal communication, February 9, 1993).

Case management programs have much in common with mentoring programs in that they emphasize individualized attention to the needs of their

clients. Case managers also serve as brokers for services and usually have extensive knowledge of public and community agencies and the services available through them. Rounds, Weil and Theil (1992) believed case management models to be especially appropriate for vulnerable populations such as pregnant and parenting teens because of their coordinated approach to serving a multiplicity of needs and their emphasis upon follow-up and monitoring. A program described by Rounds et al. (1992) is the largest state operated program of its kind and provides essentially the same services as the comprehensive programs mentioned above with a few noteworthy additions: involvement of fathers and the provision of continuous case management to the teen parents.

Warrick, Christianson, Walruff and Cook (1993) also supported the inclusion of case management in comprehensive, school-based programs. In a demonstration program involving 789 pregnant and parenting teens, they found that case management was one of two critical program elements contributing to school continuation. The other important component was aggressive outreach efforts that enabled programs to enroll students early and establish strong peer support.

Throughout the literature reviewed, the development of the teen parent's self-esteem appeared frequently. Although difficult to teach and to measure, many program models included this as a discrete goal and in others it was seen as a byproduct of other activities or interventions. Dash (1990) believed teen parenthood represented an affirmation of masculinity, femininity and adulthood among seriously disadvantaged young people who had nothing else to look forward to. He recommended intensive academic work in the elementary grades and full employment opportunities as a more adaptive road to self-esteem among

inner city ghetto youths.

Other investigators endorsed comprehensive services with special emphasis upon certain elements within the program. Coyle-Williams (1989) stated that employment preparation and vocational elements are often the weakest link in the comprehensive service continuum. She recommended inclusion and strengthening of these program components as a direct route to self-sufficiency for teenage parents. She also hypothesized that expansion of employment related services will increase self-esteem as well as the likelihood of repeat pregnancies.

The *Family Support Act* of 1988 provides that teenage mothers who are receiving welfare payments can be required to attend school or to participate in the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) programs. This law is changing the focus of services for parenting teenagers resulting in more vocationally oriented programs. Implemented in various parts of the country, these programs have typically combined rewards with sanctions and have imposed rather strict demands for participation with the provision of supportive services (Ooms & Owen, 1991). Examples of these programs include Teenage Parent Demonstration (TDP), Learning, Earning and Parenting (LEAP) and Learnfare.

The results of this approach appeared somewhat mixed. In certain areas the programs have created controversy because of their punitive nature and in others inaccurate record keeping and bureaucratic mishandling resulted in sanctions being applied inconsistently or unfairly. More commonly, however, there has simply not been enough money to fund the programs and in many states, including the writer's, the JOBS program has served a small fraction of the teen parents who are eligible even though their participation is theoretically mandatory.

The National Research Council's report, *Risking the Future* (Hayes, 1987),

provided one of the most complete overall summaries of the numerous issues surrounding adolescent pregnancy and childbearing and also presented comprehensive recommendations for policy and programming. Although this report made it clear that lasting, long-term solutions will not be found in a single solution strategy, it endorsed a number of approaches that have demonstrated success in targeted areas as well as others that have shown promise. These interventions include health and nutrition services, infant and child care, child support enforcement, employment programs and a broad array of special educational services including alternative schools. Case management and mentoring services were seen as essential to provide the emotional support and individualized supervision that many teen parents need. Hayes also recommended programs to help teens increase motivation and a sense of the future such as life planning and life skills training.

Burden and Klerman (1984) brought these concepts together in a clear summation:

> Teenage women who see career opportunities for themselves and who receive support in achieving the education and experience essential to attaining their ambitions are more likely to defer childbearing and are less likely to be dependent on either short-term or long-term welfare assistance.

Description and Justification for Solution Selected

Various strategies could have been tried in an effort to prepare teenage parents to meet their adult responsibilities. As the literature has substantiated, diverse theories and programs abound and while many are beneficial, none is regarded as definitive by those most knowledgeable in the field. This writer's

practicum project, therefore, did not "solve" the problem but did mitigate some of the negative consequences associated with teenage childbearing.

The intervention selected was an educational program delivered by the writer and an agency cofacilitator that emphasized life skills, pre-employment preparation and career awareness. This program, presented in seminar format, targeted pregnant or parenting teenagers who were currently or formerly involved in the agency's in-home instructional program for pregnant and parenting teens. It was anticipated that at least eight teenagers would participate in this program and that most, if not all, would already be parents. It was hoped that some teen fathers would attend. It was acknowledged that the number of participants might change during the implementation.

The seminar was held once a week for approximately two hours in the agency's main office. It consisted of an educational/self-exploratory component lasting 60 - 90 minutes, a brief support-group activity and a pizza supper. Participants were provided with a textbook, *Career Choices* (Bingham & Stryker, 1990), that they used for the duration of the program. An accompanying workbook (Bingham & Stryker, 1990) was given to participants. They were encouraged to keep it after the seminar concluded and to continue adding entries. Other materials (Garner, 1989; Lindner, 1987) were used to supplement this text, however, *Career Choices* was the primary resource.

The curriculum provided by *Career Choices* is interdisciplinary and intended to be integrated with language arts, social studies and even math. Because it is far too extensive to be completed in a 12 session seminar, the materials were used selectively. Emphasis was placed upon self-exploration, awareness, self-esteem, development of goals and strategies for goal attainment.

Each session included hands-on activities and interactive exercises. The desired outcome was that participants would know themselves better, appreciate their own uniqueness, establish some specific goals and develop a sense of what must be done to achieve them. It was anticipated that they would also enjoy themselves and make some new friends.

This intervention was selected because it addressed a need that is currently underserved in the local area. Most programs provide health care or emphasize traditional educational services. Among three local program directors interviewed, all stated that career awareness and pre-employment preparation is a valuable program component that they have not been able to fully explore. Furthermore, among eight teen parents interviewed by the writer, all expressed an interest in the content of the seminar and stated that they had not been presented with anything similar within their regular school curriculum. Although a few other local programs have provided pre-employment preparation and job readiness, it is unlikely that any of those targeted for this program would have been able to attend these programs due to lack of transportation.

Finally, this program was appropriate for the nonprofit agency and the local community because funding had become available to support interventions of this kind. The agency had received a grant to develop a vocationally oriented program and the career awareness seminar met the established criteria. Other community agencies have also recognized a need for this addition to their existing programs for pregnant and parenting teens and have expressed interest in using a similar curriculum. In fact, with financial support for social services in such short supply, it appears likely that funding sources will place increasing emphasis on programs that highlight self-sufficiency and hold promise for reducing welfare reliance.

Report of Action Taken

> 'Know thyself' is one of the most challenging yet important tasks of our lives. People who know who they are and what they want have a better chance of figuring out how to achieve their own form of success and ultimately happiness and personal contentment. (Bingham & Stryker, 1990b, p. 3)

Implementation of the Career Awareness Seminar for pregnant and parenting teens began in the offices of the nonprofit agency on May 12, 1993. Although it was projected that the Seminar would attract and retain eight participants, this was an educated guess. The writer, cofacilitator and other agency staff had made diligent efforts to publicize the program through personal interviews, telephone calls and distribution of flyers, and about 20 teens had expressed interest in the seminar. Still, as the start date approached, no one really knew what to expect.

Six participants attended the first session, including two young women who were not teenagers. Eight came the second time and ten the third. Attendance, throughout the implementation, was unpredictable and fluid with the number attending ranging from four to eleven. Some who were present when the seminar began later dropped out. Others joined later and stayed. Difficulties in coordinating transportation were experienced throughout the seminar and it was not until the final meeting that any conclusions about attendance could be drawn.

The overall goal of the seminar was to help each participant become more aware of her/his own identity and career ambitions and to develop an action plan for realizing those dreams. The text, *Career Choices* (Bingham & Stryker, 1990) and its accompanying *Workbook for the Text: Career Choices* (Bingham &

Stryker, 1990) provided the basic resources for the seminar and were used throughout the implementation. The text, in a systematic and logical fashion, guides teens and young adults in self-exploration and the development of a detailed personal profile. It also explores practical problems faced by the nearly or newly independent and teaches necessary life skills including decision-making, goal setting, handling setbacks and the importance of attitude.

Career Choices (Bingham & Stryker, 1990) could not be used in its entirety because the curriculum is too extensive to be completed in 12 sessions. Thus, chapters in the book were used selectively with a focus upon self-knowledge and the development of a concrete future plan. Some chapters, such as Chapter Two, "Your Personal Profile," (Bingham & Stryker, 1990, p. 23), Chapter Seven, "Decision Making," (1990, p. 167) and Chapter Eight, "Setting Goals and Solving Problems," (1990, p. 181) were completed in detail. Others were used in part (Career Research) and some, the chapter on budgeting for example, were not used at all due to the time constraints.

Supplementary materials included resources that contributed to the overall goal of assisting students in their self-exploration. Goal setting exercises contained in *Choices* (Bingham, Edmonson & Stryker, 1984) were used. Decision-making and self-esteem exercises from Garner (1989) and Lindner (1987) were also helpful. Two videos, part of Lindner's materials, were shown. *Breaking Out* (Lindner, 1987), shown during the fifth session, portrayed young women in nontraditional occupations and was especially appropriate. A guest speaker, representing a successful local program that provides employment readiness, job training and placement, addressed the group during one of the later sessions.

Testing materials, previously described in Chapter III, formed an important

part of each student's self-investigation. The *Voc-Tech Quick Screener* (Robinett & Kauk, 1991) was administered during the fifth session and the *JOB-0* (Cutler et al., 1992) was used on the tenth.

Throughout the Career Awareness Seminar, participants were reminded and encouraged to return to their "Personal Profile" page in the *Workbook for the Text: Career Choices* (Bingham & Stryker, 1990, p. 11) to enter new information as it was revealed through the tests, exercises and class discussions (see Appendix C). This page, affectionately known as the "Bull's Eye Chart," became the focal point of seminar activities, providing a central location to pull together the pieces of each student's personal puzzle.

The culmination of the seminar was the completion of a Personal Action Plan by each participant. This plan was introduced during the sixth session. The writer and cofacilitator described the purpose of the plan and explained how the self-assessment provided by *Career Choices* (Bingham & Stryker, 1990), the tests and the personal profile would help generate the information needed to complete it. Students were encouraged to fill out whatever portion of the plan they could during the sixth session, but were also assured that it did not need to be finished that evening and could be added to or revised later.

Participants were asked to return to the Personal Action Plan at several points during the remainder of the seminar to add, delete or revise. Objectives were added to the plan after the goal setting chapter and exercises were completed (sessions nine and ten). During session 11, a clean copy of the plan was distributed and each participant was asked to complete it. By this time, the *JOB-O* (Cutler et al., 1992) had been administered, the selected chapters in the text had been completed and most participants understood what was expected.

Again, it was emphasized that no plan is ever completely final but is analogous to a road map that helps one find a new place. Arrival in that place usually means getting a new map.

The seminar was held each Wednesday afternoon from 4:30 until 6:30 p.m. in the nonprofit agency's main conference room. This was a large, pleasantly-appointed setting with ample seating and tables large enough for everyone to spread out their books and papers. A video monitor and flip chart were also available. Each session began with an educational period during which the textbook and supplementary materials were used. This was followed by a short group discussion/support activity and an informal supper. Sometimes, depending upon the arrival of the meal, the order in which these activities took place was reversed. Two cofacilitators were almost always present.

Teen parents seldom have transportation or regular child care, thus these services were arranged by agency staff through the use of volunteers. A smaller conference room, well separated from the seminar room, was used for child care and volunteers were supervised by an agency staff member. The number of children cared for varied from three to nine, with an average of five children in the child care room per session.

Because the arrangement of transportation was such a formidable obstacle, the agency attempted to identify "volunteer buddies" to transport participants to and from the seminar. It was anticipated that volunteer buddies would serve the additional purpose of encouraging the students to complete any outside work that was assigned (there was some homework) and assisting them with it, if needed. This program component was intended to provide the "mentoring" that is recommended so frequently in the literature.

The effort to recruit dependable volunteers for the Career Awareness Seminar was only partially successful, for various reasons. The metropolitan area is large and students lived in diverse locations, some a considerable distance from the agency's office. It was difficult to find volunteers in all locations and the time of day may have been inconvenient for some. Also, planning time was inadequate. With sufficient lead-time, a more extensive recruitment could have been conducted and an orientation provided to help volunteers understand the program's expectations and the special characteristics of teen parents.

In fact, problems surrounding volunteers, including communication gaps, being late, leaving early or going to the wrong place were the most pervasive difficulties encountered in arranging the seminar. These problems were exacerbated by the unpredictability and unstable living situations of some participants. They, too, were sometimes not where they said they would be and could not be located. Nevertheless, some volunteers made exceptional contributions to the seminar and one has been hired to facilitate the program as an ongoing part of the agency's services to teens. A total of 11 volunteers had some level of involvement in the seminar.

Participants in the Career Awareness Seminar were diverse in age and ethnicity. All were female except one. All had at least started high school, four had graduated and one received her GED. The following chart summarizes the personal information gathered on the 12 participants who started the seminar. See Table 1.

Table 1

Career Awareness Seminar Participant Information

Student		Sex	Age	Race	Status	Children	Sch. Yr. Com	Paternity	Support	Attendance	Involvement
M. C.		F	17	H	Single	1	10	No	No	Dropped	Low
N. C.		F	14	W	Single	1	9	No	No	12	High
L. C.		F	20	W	Single	2	12	No	No	8	High
D. D.		F	17	B	Single	2	10	No	No	7	Moderate
V. E.		F	17	W	Single	1	11	No	No	Dropped	Low
S. H.		F	17	B	Single	1	12	Yes	No	8	Moderate
B. N.		F	28	H	Div.	3	GED 9	1No, 2 Y	No	9	Moderate
A. R		M	18	H	Single	1	10	No	No	6	Moderate
M. R.		F	32	H	Single	3	12	No	No	9	High
D. S.		F	17	W	Single	1	11	No	No	Dropped	Low
K. W.		F	20	W	Sep.	2	11	Yes	No	10	High
V. W.		F	47	W	Mar.	2	12	Yes	Yes	7	Moderate

Three participants dropped out before the midpoint of the seminar. Of these three, one was pregnant and gave birth. Another found two summer jobs and did not have time to attend. The third, a ward of the court in foster care, was required by her case manager to attend another program. These three did not complete Personal Action Plans and were not counted in the outcomes.

Among the nine participants remaining, three were adults. Two of these women were part of the agency's Hispanic VISTA project and had been working

for the agency for approximately six months. Both were uncertain about their future plans and asked to join the seminar to help establish direction in their lives. One had been a teen parent. The third adult was the mother of one of the teen parents. She visited a few times and decided to stay.

These differences in age were not a problem but rather were an asset. The nature of the curriculum was such that it is applicable to almost anyone. The fact that adults, even older adults, continue to face identity issues and often reevaluate their vocational choices seemed reassuring to the teen parents. The adults also provided a different perspective that proved beneficial.

Within the group of teen parents there was a good deal of diversity. Some were motivated, ambitious and clearly headed toward higher educational achievement. This was true of N. C., the youngest member of the group, who also seemed the most focused and determined to absorb all material presented. She was the only one with perfect attendance and was late only when her transportation failed. N.C. was fortunate to have some extended family support and to live in a middle class home and neighborhood.

When interviewed prior to the seminar, N. C. stated that she had thought about studying to become a psychologist but was rethinking that choice because so many other teen parents expressed the same idea. There just had to be something "weird" about that, she felt. After completing the seminar, however, N.C. discovered that she had a genuine interest in health and social science areas and possessed some of the skills, aptitudes and the personality style necessary to pursue a career in psychology. Thus she affirmed her original choice and was able to feel more confident about it because she had conducted a systematic assessment of herself. She also identified several related areas of interest that

might develop into viable alternatives should her interest in psychology decline or other factors make a career in that area unrealistic.

Other teen parents were very different from N. C. The only male in the group, A. R., found out about the seminar when the writer interviewed the mother of his child. Although she expressed interest, she never attended. A. R. came when he could. A high school dropout who was unemployed at the time of the original interview, he lived in a poor area and was attempting to resist gang involvement. Though he obtained a job during the seminar, he also allegedly abused his partner and thus spent a few weeks in jail. Fortunately, he did not lose his job and at the close of the seminar he was out of jail and back at work.

Despite this history, A. R. seemed to be a gentle soul whose favorite activity was working on his drawings of sacred hearts embellished with exotic plant life. He displayed talent and he appeared to have some awareness of his ability. Certainly he knew where his interest lay but he had little notion of what to do to pursue it. Frequent absences caused him to miss exercises that might have helped him to understand the process of goal attainment and he did not seem motivated to make them up. Although he met the minimum requirements for successful completion of the Personal Action Plan, his future remains in doubt. This assessment is not based on the fact that he missed a few class sessions but rather upon the overwhelming disadvantage of his life situation.

Another interesting participant was L.C. Although she was 20, she already had two children, the oldest of whom was about three. She was a high school graduate, mildly hearing impaired, and living with her parents. They had recently moved to the area from another state to help her escape an abusive relationship with the father of her children.

L. C. was motivated and interested in the seminar. She worked hard and contributed to group discussions though she did not always appear to have a firm grasp on reality. An example of this was her confidence that she could successfully handle a telephone solicitation job when there was no telephone in her home. Of all group members, she experienced the most traumatic event while the seminar was in progress. Her mother was involved in a motorcycle accident, was mortally wounded and died after remaining on life supports for about two weeks. In spite of this tragedy, L. C. returned to the final two sessions, but the outlook for her future is guarded, at best. In addition to the normal grieving process, she will now have to deal with the loss of family support that might have made returning to school a possibility for her. Perhaps, however, this is an overly pessimistic view. It may be that she will manage to turn this crisis into an opportunity. Ongoing assistance will very likely be necessary for this to occur.

The last session of the seminar was devoted to completion of any unfinished assignments including the Personal Action Plans. These were duplicated and the originals returned to the participants with encouragement to review them often, revise them when necessary and, most of all, regularly assess their progress toward meeting the goals and objectives they had set for themselves. The group discussion centered around what each person was going to do next. Eight participants were present and each had a plan. Students were asked to anonymously complete a brief evaluation instrument (see Appendix D.).

The seminar concluded with a party. Certificates of successful completion were presented to the eight participants present along with a guide to local resource services and a Job Search Assistance Handbook (Department of Economic Security, 1982). A good time was had by all.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

Briefly restated, the problem was that pregnant and parenting teenagers face adult responsibilities that they are unprepared to assume. The solution was to present an educational and self-exploratory program to teenagers that would help each participant become aware of her/his own identity and career goals and to develop a realistic plan for their attainment. It must be reiterated that this "solution" involves only a minuscule portion of a complex social problem that the nation has barely acknowledged, much less begun to proactively address. Teenage parenting and the educational, social and economic disadvantages that are so intrinsically connected with it will surely hold serious consequences far into the twenty-first century.

Although 12 individuals began the Career Awareness Seminar, three dropped out before the midpoint and did not complete a Personal Action Plan. These individuals attended three or fewer sessions and were not counted in the outcomes. Since it had not been established before the seminar began, the writer and cofacilitator decided to count every participant who attended half (six) or more sessions. A summary of the outcomes is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Career Awareness Seminar Participant Outcomes

Student		Goals	Objectives	Career Interest	School	Work
N. C.		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
L. C.		Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
D. D.		No	No	No	No	No
S. H.		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
B. N.		Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
A. R.		Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
M. R.		Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
K. W.		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
V. W.		Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

The following results are reported in two formats. First they are reported by number of total participants (nine) and second, by number of teenagers (six).

The first expected outcome was that six out of eight participants in the program would identify at least one area of career interest. Results of this outcome indicated that eight out of nine total participants identified at least one area of career interest. Five out of six teenagers identified at least one area of career interest. In this area, the goals of the practicum were met.

The second anticipated outcome was that six out of eight would establish a long-range career goal, a three-year goal, a one-year goal and an outline of the

steps necessary to attain each goal. The minimum standard was that at least two out of three goals must be stated with at least one objective leading to each goal. Eight out of nine total participants met the minimum standard as did five out of six teenagers. Although the goals for this outcome were met, not everyone exceeded the minimum standard. Some confusion between goals and objectives was apparent and two participants simply repeated the same objectives for each goal.

The final outcome involved a determination of the participants' involvement in an educational program and current participation in the work force. Three out of nine total participants were in school or were registered to return in the fall of 1993. Three out of six teenagers were in school or were returning in the fall. The goal for this portion of the third outcome was not met.

Seven out of nine total participants were working either full or part-time. Four out of six teenagers were working either full or part-time. Summer jobs were counted in this total. The goal for the second portion of the third outcome was met.

During the final meeting of the Career Awareness Seminar, an evaluation instrument was distributed to the participants (see Appendix D). The eight students who were present rated the seminar's effectiveness in helping them to (a) increase their level of self-knowledge, (b) identify areas of career interest, (c) set goals, and, (d) develop plans for goal achievement. Participants were also asked to rate the seminar's enjoyability.

Ratings were excellent, without exception, and they were reinforced by the personal comments included on the evaluation forms. All respondents rated the seminar helpful or very helpful in every area addressed on the evaluation. One person asked to come back a second time. All participants rated the seminar "very enjoyable."

Discussion

Although the outcomes of this practicum were generally favorable and the Career Awareness Seminar was considered by all associated with it to be an unqualified success, the writer cannot help but feel a certain sense of disappointment. The most important outcome, in this writer's view, is educational continuation, and this is the one area in which the goal was not fully met.

This disappointment, however, is tempered with the understanding that a 12-week program can barely scratch the surface when it comes to impacting a problem so pervasive and complex. Probably it performed as well as anyone could reasonably expect. It will be recalled that Weatherley (1991) pointed out that there is no "quick-fix" and that short-term interventions cannot be expected to compensate for a lifetime of poverty and disadvantage.

> The identified problem ... may be grounded in antecedent conditions which local service providers can do little about, and which national policymakers choose not to confront. Some of the worst consequences of teen childbearing, for example, appear to be grounded in the impoverished backgrounds of many teen parents.... Yet policymakers have chosen to advocate services for teen parents rather than addressing the underlying poverty that makes it such a serious problem. (1991, p. 17)

The teenagers as well as the adults who participated in the seminar could all be considered disadvantaged by most standards. All but one were poor, three were in out-of-home placements because of abuse, neglect or delinquency. Most lived in neighborhoods that are deprived and dangerous. The three adults were all underemployed. Five out of the nine who were counted in the outcomes for the seminar were minorities. Indeed, the only participant who could not be regarded as "disadvantaged" was the one who dropped out because she had two jobs.

One participant who was counted in the outcomes but who did not attend

the last five sessions was D.D. A 17-year-old of mixed black and indian heritage, she had two children and was reportedly expecting a third. On probation for several offenses, she was bright, angry and verbally aggressive in the Career Awareness Seminar. Although she was a poor reader, she processed information quickly and had no difficulty in completing assignments. Working with her was challenging and she added energy, flair and excitement to the group.

After the seventh session she did not return, much to the writer's dismay. It was rumored that she had run away but it was not until later that reliable information became available. Apparently, D. D. had quit her job, taken her children and had gone into hiding because a local gang had threatened her life.

Such realities provide the leitmotif for this practicum. The pressures experienced by these young people, the exigencies of their lives, can scarcely be comprehended by those raised in the 50s and 60s. It was always surprising what they endured and how they survived.

Recommendations

> We cannot go back and change the last decade's birth rates. But we can prevent and reduce the damages to our children and families and ensure every child a healthy start, a head start, and a fair start right now. In the waning years of the twentieth century, doing what is right for children and doing what is necessary to save our national economic skin have converged. (Edelman, 1992, p. 93)

1. Stronger emphasis should be placed on the importance of education in future Career Awareness seminars. This may be accomplished through establishing linkages with local community college programs that provide special services to high-risk students. Seminars should be supplemented with speakers from community colleges and field trips to nearby campuses.

2. Interventions for teen parents focusing on job readiness and self-sufficiency should pay close attention to the individualized mentoring or case management program components (Warrick, et al., 1993). Also, programs that provide ongoing assistance after a specific component (such as Career Awareness) has ended are strongly recommended.

3. Programs serving pregnant and parenting teenagers must attend to the primary needs of their clients if their interventions are to succeed. Specifically, transportation and child care issues must be addressed and resolved.

4. The Career Choices curriculum is highly recommended for use with pregnant and parenting teenagers who have at least an eighth-grade reading level. There are many possibilities for use of these materials that were not explored in this practicum.

Dissemination

This practicum was very well received within the nonprofit agency. It was an idea whose time had come and was an appropriate expansion of the agency's existing services to teens. Soon after implementation began, the Program Services Manager and the Coordinator realized that additional paid staff would be necessary if the program or something similar were to be continued. Both the writer and cofacilitator had worked hard to make the seminar a successful reality, but the writer would be leaving and the cofacilitator already had a full-time job.

The agency applied for grant funding for staff to continue the program and was awarded $10,000. This grant is supporting a one-fourth time position specifically dedicated to Career Awareness and related programs that may grow from it. Happily, one of the volunteers who had devoted many hours and

considerable expertise to the seminar was hired for the position. She began working in July, 1993 and plans for the next seminar are well under way. Career Awareness for pregnant and parenting teens is being offered again in September, 1993.

Other plans for dissemination include an article about the program to be written for the quarterly newsletter published by the writer's office. Also, the writer has agreed to participate in a panel highlighting teen parenting interventions at the statewide Child Abuse Prevention Conference to be held in January, 1994, The Career Awareness Seminar will be the writer's topic.

Finally, since the writer's office provides information on programs and services to a statewide constituency, it is likely that there will be many opportunities to promote this intervention for appropriate target populations.

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APPENDIX A

PERSONAL ACTION PLAN

PERSONAL ACTION PLAN

NAME:_____DATE:_____

My areas of career interest are:

1._____

2._____

3._____

The skills I will need in each area include:

1._____

_____

2._____

_____

3._____

_____

The training I will need in each area to develop my skills is:

1._____

_____

2._____

_____

3._____

_____

PERSONAL ACTION PLAN, Page 2

My long-range career goal is:

_____

Other ideas if I am not sure:

1._____

2._____

My three-year goal is:

_____

Specific actions I will take (objectives) during the next three years to help me meet my goal:

1._____

2._____

3._____

My one-year goal is:

_____

Specific actions I will take (objectives) within the year to help me meet my goal:

1._____

2._____

3._____

APPENDIX B

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONNAIRE

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONNAIRE

Client's Name:_____

Assigned Volunteer Name:_____

Marital Status:_____

If unmarried, what is your current living situation? _____

How long?_____ Parents Extended family Baby's father Friends

Other:_____

What is the father's level of involvement?_____

Has child's paternity been established?_____

Is the father's name on birth certificate?_____

When do you hope to be self-supporting and living independently?_____

_____

What is your current grade level in school or last level completed?_____

_____

Are you currently working?_____Where?_____

What paying jobs have you had in the past?_____

_____

Do you have a social security number?_____

What would you like to be or do if you didn't have to worry about education, other preparation or resources?_____

What are your goals for the next 1 - 3 years?

For school?_____

For work?_____

What are you going to do within the next 6 months to one year to move toward this goal?_____

Do you have additional long-range (5 years) goals?_____

_____

Would you attend an goal setting/career awareness seminar?_____

What are your greatest needs and/or what would you want to learn from such a seminar?_____

What day and what time would be best for you?_____

Would you be interested in a late afternoon program with a pizza supper?_____

Would you need transportation?_____Child care?_____

Additional Comments:

APPENDIX C

PERSONAL PROFILE

Your Personal Profile

Write your name in the center of the chart, then add as many words as you can that describe your own passions, values, strengths, and so forth. As you fill out your chart, keep in mind that everyone has many different sides. Don't worry if some of your answers seem incompatible with others.

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APPENDIX D

CAREER AWARENESS SEMINAR EVALUATION

Career Awareness Seminar Evaluation

Please rate the Career Awareness Seminar in the following areas:
Circle the number that best describes your opinion.

The Career Awareness Seminar helped me to know myself better. (values, interests, strengths, aptitudes, skills and personality style)

1	2	3	4	5
Very Helpful		Somewhat Helpful		Not Helpful

The seminar helped me to identify or clarify areas of career interest.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Helpful		Somewhat Helpful		Not Helpful

The seminar helped me to set or strengthen goals for my future.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Helpful		Somewhat Helpful		Not Helpful

I now have concrete ideas about what I need to do to achieve my goals.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Helpful		Somewhat Helpful		Not Helpful

The Seminar was enjoyable.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Enjoyable		Somewhat Enjoyable		Not Enjoyable